1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

groups (except, of course, ego's father with ego's mother and ego with his wife). The membership of each family is the same as in Euro-American families and includes the same members as found here, the only difference being that a man can have a number of wives, which means in Murngin society that the children have a number of mothers. The sister is not only sexually taboo to her brothers, but any direct contact with her is also taboo. The incest idea is enlarged upon to include these additional restrictions in the general behavior of the opposite sexes of one generation within the family. This extreme form of the incest taboo in the total behavior of brothers and sisters, expressed overtly in concrete negative acts (avoidance), contributes to the organization of the family of orientation. The avoidance rules become concrete symbols of the underlying rule of incest which forces marriage outside the family of orientation and thereby creates the family of procreation out of extra-familial personalities.

The father-son reciprocal is the solid bond around which ego's spiritual affiliations are organized, since by a mystical experience of his father he leaves the totem well as a tiny fish and is directed by his male parent into his mother's womb. The father's mystical experience is the expression of the creation of the family of procreation. It is in fact the first element in the filio-parental relationship, since it is the first moment when either parent is supposed to know the beginning of this new generation within his own family. The annunciation of the child to the father by a dream symbolizes the parents' sexual intercourse, and in Murngin thought both dream and intercourse are necessary for conception and birth.

This first spiritual bond built on the father-son reciprocal determines the child's place in the totemic ceremonies which are of major import in his adult life: his whole spiritual identity, including his totem and power names; his sacred well where his soul will return after death; and the dogma and ritual which surround all these spiritual entities. So much for the orientating relations of ego's generation and that of his parents. Within his own generation and his family of orientation his brothers and sisters are to be found. His brothers and he occupy an identical place within the social structure. They are in the same patrilineal line as he and enjoy the same solidarity with the father as he, the primary differentiating factor being the distinction between older and younger brothers, as expressed in the kinship terminology. The brothers are spiritually almost identical, since they have the same

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 totem and clan well, and their names, although somewhat different, are items from the same totemic configuration. They marry under the same rules and regulations and obtain for wives the same social personality (their mother's brother's daughters) and, by the action of the [587] levirate and sororate, sometimes the identical women. In every respect the brothers are equivalent, primarily because of this occupation of the same sociological place in the family of procreation. The equivalence of brothers is one of the basic principles underlying the fundamental structure of the kinship organization.

The brother-sister reciprocal is fundamentally powerful and primarily the same as in Euro-American society. There is also a considerable degree of equivalence between brothers and sisters. They occupy the same generation and same line of descent. From a structural point of view, the horizontal generation line cross-sects the perpendicular patrilineal line at the same point for both the sisters and the brothers. They are therefore from the same totem well, they have the same totems, et cetera, but because of their sexual difference they are not completely equivalent. Further, they marry people who occupy different points within the social kinship structure, which tends to differentiate them.

593 The marriage of a male ego to his wife is something more than the
582 modern marriage contract to any woman out of a general group. He
602 marries into his wife's family of orientation, a group of four personalities who are his mother's brother, his mother's brother's wife (who is also part of another family), his wife's brother, and his wife's sister, who is also mother's brother's daughter. Ego, then, is constantly looking to his mother's people for his wives while he is a member of his own family of orientation and while forming his family of procreation, and when he has a son he still seeks the father of his mother's group to obtain wives for his male offspring. On the other hand, he has nothing to obtain during childhood and early manhood from his father's side of the family. When he has a daughter old enough for marriage, he wants a son-in-law; but he is then not a seeker but the one sought after by his sister's son, which puts him in a very strong position. To summarize: in his family of orientation he is weak in his relations with his mother's people and strong with his father's; in his family of procreation this still holds true. It is to be noted that on his father's side there are no tabooed collateral relatives with the exception of his sister, who is a part of his own family; but on his mother's side two are
593 taboo: mokul rumeru and momelker. The elementary family tends to

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

The elementary family tends to be much more stable in Murngin society than it does in our own because of the operation of the sororate and levirate, since if a man obtains two or more sisters for wives and they are looked upon as mothers, the death of any one of them does not disrupt the equilibrium of the family structure; if the husband dies, his brothers inherit the wives and children and there is still no break within the general structure, since the children have, as the classificatory terminology attests, regarded their father's brothers as fathers.

An examination of the relationship of the two elementary families to the entire kinship system shows that all the perpendicular patrilineal lines of descent except the two extremes to the right and left of ego (the natchiwalker-gawel and the dumungur-waku line)[3] are all in direct familial structural articulation with ego's elementary families of orientation and procreation. This is of extreme importance in the formation of the kinship pattern and partially explains it. To understand this properly, the kinship terms as separate entities must be forgotten and the total kinship system looked upon as a group of interlocking elementary familial units, in each of which there are certain social elements which have an intercellular unity and system of relations of their own.

Five of the patrilineal lines and all of the horizontal lines of generation interlock directly with ego's elementary families of procreation and orientation. The emotional content of the organized system of attitudes and behavior in ego's family is directly connected with the organized emotional content of the other families, and from these latter groups the larger structure and the total kinship system is constructed. The termination of the perpendicular patrilineal lines two generations above and below ego is partially accounted for by the fact that the direct contact with ego's elementary families stops exactly there, with marikmo on one end and maraitcha at the other. The only important personalities left out of this interlocking group of elementary families' structures are dumungur (lower left-hand corner of the kinship chart), mari (male), marelker and momelker. The mari-male and momelker personalities cluster about the mokul rumeru entity. These people all belong to her family of orientation, since one is her father, one her mother (see also mari-kutara reciprocal, page 99 f.), and one her brother. She is in a critical relation to ego because she is the wife of gawel, who controls ego's chances of obtaining a wife. She is at the same time

[3] See Chart II, page 50, for these lines. The reader should use this chart throughout the present chapter.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

and son, maternal uncle and sister's son. Every individual term represents a complex nexus of social behavior which creates a well-defined social personality. Each of these social personalities is but one element of the larger personality of each individual within the whole society, since each male has all the male terms in the kinship system applied to him, and every woman all the female terms.

Each of the reciprocals is considered below in structural order according to patrilineal line. The first relationships considered are those in a man's own line, beginning with those of his own generation—older and younger brother, brother and sister, and sister and sister. We next consider the collateral relatives in the patrilineal lines outside ego's own, beginning with the husband and wife relationship.

● *Wawa* ⟷ *Yukiyuko* (older brother ⟷ younger brother)

The general type of this relationship has several varieties of which the natives are conscious when they use the two general terms. They comprise: (1) Two brothers from the same father and same mother; (2) two brothers from the same father and two mothers who are sisters; (3) from the same mother and two fathers who are brothers; (4) from two fathers who are brothers, and two mothers who are sisters; (5) brothers belonging to the same clan but only tribal in relationship; (6) brothers from nearby clans; (7) brothers from more remote clans and tribes. The intensity of behavior decreases from the first to the last mentioned; indeed, the last two varieties may have little in common with the other five; yet given normal conditions, the Murngin and other tribes with their type of kinship would consider it wrong if certain, though not all, of the rules regulating this relationship were broken. Hence it will be necessary to differentiate among the various kinds of brothers.[4]

The junior levirate is a prominent mechanism. When an older brother dies the brother next in age and consanguinity receives his wives and becomes father to the children. This is not only a privilege, but a duty. Frequently wives thus acquired, being past the age of bearing children or gathering food, are really an economic liability to the heir; yet he must take and look after them.

The junior levirate functions even before the death of the older brother. A gawel (father-in-law) is supposed to give his waku (son-in-law) all the female offspring from his own wives, but there is a

[4] An aborigine, speaking fair English, described the first two varieties as "my proper wawa," the third and fourth as "my proper wawa, but little bit different," the fifth as "close-up wawa," the sixth and seventh as "far-off wawas."

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

strong feeling that a man who has acquired two wives or all the issue of his gawel's first wife should allow his younger brother to have his share of the women from the gawel and mokul. The older brother, however, has the first right to them, and his gawel will ask his permission before giving the third daughter to the younger man. He will say: "It is better that your yukiyuko have this woman, for you have two already, and he has none. It is better that I have more waku to help me." Unless the older brother is an extraordinarily selfish person, he immediately replies, "Yes, you tell him to feed her" (give her to him for a wife); and he helps his younger brother procure the presents he must give gawel and mokul for this wife.

Mutual help prevails between wawa and yukiyuko in giving frequent presents to gawel and mokul. When wawa is making presents for his first wives, yukiyuko gives him spears, game from the hunt, and whatever wawa might like to present to his parents-in-law. When yukiyuko's turn comes, wawa is equally helpful. There is no obligation on yukiyuko to make presents to wawa for the latter's right to the galle that are to come to the former. Rather, wawa frequently asks gawel to give his other daughters to yukiyuko and makes presents to gawel for this purpose. Several motives guide him in this procedure. The first is brotherly affection and family pride. Own brothers through one father and one mother or father's brothers and mother's sisters are one's best friends, and most like one socially. Then there is frequently the fear that yukiyuko will fornicate with wawa's wives. This is no uncommon thing; the jungle and Australian bush offer ample opportunities for secret meetings. An old man usually suffers this indignity in silence, since he knows that his senility forces his wives to go to other men for sexual satisfaction and that his younger brothers who will inherit them are the proper ones for them. If the older brother has this situation too forcibly thrust upon him by camp gossip, he must attempt to discipline the younger man by scolding him—but "he doesn't talk very hard." Among younger men this would cause considerable trouble and would not happen very often except among tribal brothers, the whole pressure of society being against the younger man: all the relatives in his male line and those of the clan would defend the rights of the older man and condemn the younger. Finally, an older brother always helps a younger brother to acquire a wife because it settles the younger man and tends to prevent his getting into trouble with more remote wawas, yukiyukos, and other kin, by

1; Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

copulating with their wives, thereby forcing the wawa to defend his brother from their vengeance.

Because all of the members of a group of brothers are all dué to the same galle and the women thereby are the potential wives of all yukiyukos of this group, there is a strong tribal rule that no yukiyuko can talk to or be near wawa's wives, but wawa can talk to and be near yukiyuko's. (This would not be true of a woman beyond the age when she would be sexually interested in yukiyuko, nor of boys below the age of puberty.) The rule holds against all yukiyukos, near or distant, except where blood brothers are involved who have a tremendous love and trust in each other. Breaking of the rule by blood brothers was observed, but not by tribal brothers.

There is still another method by which the junior levirate operates. A wawa often gives one or two of his younger wives to yukiyuko. These wives may merely be those promised by a gawel and for whom wawa has made presents (wawa would be forced to obtain permission from gawel in this case); or wawa may give yukiyuko wives he has already lived with, in which circumstances permission need not be asked.

If wawa has four or five wives, he may say to a single yukiyuko, "You see that one—you take her and feed her." Yukiyuko usually says, if wawa is an old man, "No, you are an old man. I'll wait until you die, then I'll have them all." Wawa replies, "No, you take her now, yukiyuko. I have many wives and you have none." Yukiyuko then takes her, and she belongs to him permanently. Wawa loses all right to her sexually and economically, and she cannot be returned to him. If yukiyuko died, his new wife would go to his younger brother, even though he were not consanguine but only tribal.

Ordinarily a man would present his younger brother with a wife if particularly pleased with some exploit of yukiyuko's, such as the successful termination of a punitive expedition against common enemies.

One of Warlumbopo's older brothers (actual) had been ambushed and mortally wounded by a tribal yukiyuko.

Shortly after this Warlumbopo walked into the camp of the dying man. Warlumbopo wailed for his dead brother. He refused to allow the wives of the dead man to bury him until he had killed the slayer of his wawa, when he returned to his dead brother and buried him.

When Daurlung, an older brother to Warlumbopo and younger to the dead man, heard the news he said, "We'll get all our Ritarngo people

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

and go fight them." "No," said Warlumbopo. He had not told Daurlung of his killing their brother's slayer since the latter had been a good friend of Daurlung's. Daurlung said, "Yes, we must go kill our brother's slayer." "You can't kill him now." "Why?" "He's dead." "Who killed him?" "I did." "My own brother! Good! I'll give you two of my wives."[8]

This episode not only illustrates the operation of the junior levirate during the life of an older brother, but shows clearly the solidarity among a group of consanguine brothers and its lack between "far-off" brothers.

Wawa always is at the head of a family of brothers and has the strongest voice in their affairs if the father is very old or dead. However, if wawa is not of an assertive type, whereas one of the younger brothers is, the latter could hold equal authority with him and frequently would have the final decision on any problem that confronted them.

The oldest brother, who has the rights of ceremonial leadership for certain of the clan and moiety ceremonies, usually has the next oldest help him, and they confer over ceremonial matters on an almost equal basis; but, given two personalities of equal strength, the older would be by virtue of his age the more powerful in family affairs.

Usually two brothers cooperate in making a canoe, since of all economic labors this is the most difficult and extends over the greatest period of time. A canoe, too, has the highest economic value of all the Murngin's technological articles. Wawa has the most control over the canoe, although yukiyuko, if a man of will, may have an equal say in its management. If it were traded to another group, all the brothers would feel they had an ownership in it, even if they had not helped make it.

The brothers usually have an equal right to the property of each, although it is definitely known that a spear, a club, a basket, or any other such article belongs to one man and not to the group. A dog is known to belong to one man; yet the other brothers have a feeling of secondary ownership, and the dog recognizes them as secondary masters, much as with us a boy may own a dog and receive primary obedience and loyalty from his pet, while his brothers are secondary masters. These latter would look upon the dog as their brother's, but as "ours" in relation to outsiders.

If a son of one brother dies, the others always join in the ceremonial

[8] There is a full account of this incident in Warlumbopo's life as a warrior in the chapter on warfare, pages 177-190.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 764 dances in the mourning for him. All varieties of brothers within the clan are included, the activity being really more a clan than a fraternal function.

593 682 Among brothers within the clan fighting is not allowed, but among brothers who belong to adjoining clans warfare is quite common.

786 837 Although the Murngin and the other seven tribes who share their type of kinship have a very strong feeling against the younger brother's copulating with an older brother's wife under ordinary circumstances, there is a period among the peoples practicing the Gunabibi ceremony when sexual "license" is recognized and even demanded between brothers and their wives. This is, however, strictly regulated; only brothers from more distant clans would be invited and allowed to exchange wives for ceremonial copulation. The tribal ideal of this custom is that a few nights before the end of the ceremony older brothers call their consanguine younger brothers and ask the latter to go to the nearby camp of the distant brothers in attendance at this ceremony, taking the older men's wives with them. The older brothers in the visitors' camp do likewise. The men and women paint themselves and go into the bush in the nearby jungle for copulation. The last night one woman may stay with several men, for a larger proportion of men than women always attend, since wifeless brothers usually enter into this ceremony. After a man has had intercourse with a tribal brother's wife, the husband puts his sweat on both of his guest's legs "so that he won't be sick from it." The men meanwhile have been [431] giving presents to the women for some time before the ceremony and the women turn the gifts over to their husbands, although they frequently keep part for themselves. In reality, there is an exchange of presents, as well as of wives, among these more distant brothers.

The above is a tribal ideal. Actually, copulation purely for pleasure [783 151] starts early in the ceremony, while the last night's indulgence is a purification rite supposed to cleanse a man and woman of impurities and to avoid illness during the period between the present ceremony and the next. The men and women have clandestine meetings, but it is generally known which people are having these assignations in the surrounding bush or jungle, and many broadly humorous remarks are passed by both sexes about their various lovers. However, some men and women would not enter into this earlier secret copulation, but would wait until the last night.[6]

[6] The ritual place of wife exchange and its significance are treated in the chapter on Murngin totemism, particularly pages 306-308.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Yeppa ⟷ ***Wawa*** and ***Yukiyuko*** (sister ⟷ older and younger brother) 593 602

There are the same varieties of yeppa as of wawa and yukiyuko. There is little difference in the behavior of a yukiyuko-yeppa and a wawa-yeppa relationship, except that if yukiyuko is an adolescent or child, he will not have an older brother's control over his sisters; but if he is an adult he has as much influence in directing their affairs as has his older brother. Yeppa calls any brother born before her "wawa" and any brother born after her "yukiyuko," exactly as a man would. With the above reservation, we can treat the yukiyuko-yeppa and the wawa-yeppa relationships as one, remembering of course the varying degree of closeness in the relationship between wawa and yukiyuko, and realizing its effect on the relationship we are now considering.

The sister and brother relationship is surrounded with taboos. If a brother speaks in the hearing of his sister, tribal or blood, he utters his words in a low voice, since she is not supposed to hear him. She speaks in the same manner before him. He never talks to her directly, nor she to him. He does not use obscenities in front of her as he would before most women (including his mother, daughter's daughter, and father's sister), nor will he allow anyone else to indulge in such language before her in his presence. They never sleep in the same hut or camp except as infants. At a very early age they are separated. Yeppa always helps her brothers if they are involved in a fight. She would not only ask assistance of her relatives but also give aid herself unless she felt a divided loyalty, in which case she would, with the help of other women, try to prevent a fight. [576] [513]

A brother is like a second father to a sister. If she is caught in adultery he gives her a beating and, if not stopped, tries to kill her. When Daoper's wife ran off with Bengaliwe her near brothers gave her an unmerciful beating and might have killed her had not other relatives interfered. Even if a brother saw her own husband copulating with his sister, he would become angry and try to beat her. However, he is careful not to see them. 583 684

A yukiyuko always accompanies yeppa when she first goes to her husband's clan to live after their marriage. The brother is usually pre-adolescent, but sometimes he may be older. He is supposed to look out for his sister, seeing that she does not commit adultery, preventing other men from seducing her, and by his presence protecting her from ill treatment by her husband. 593 591

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 [582 43] Brothers look to their sisters to supply them with wakus for their daughters to marry. A waku's importance to a man is no less than that of a son. A brother always makes presents to his sister for her son, as well as to her husband.

[262 224] A brother, but no sister, may eat a youth's kill of kangaroo, emu, et cetera, until the youth's wife has had a child. A sister is supposed to help carry the ruddled bones of the first kangaroo or emu killed by her brother, just as she helps carry her dead brother's bones.

[551] A brother and father always know and keep the tabooed names of a girl. No woman knows her ceremonial name.

593 601 There are two sets of behavior in the relationship of a brother and sister that must be treated together (see pages 110-112 for an interpretation of the Wakinu and Mirriri customs). First, she is called wakinu by all her brothers. In its primary sense, wakinu means a person without kin, and secondarily "worthless" or, more expressively, "rubbish." [776] Bamapama, the trickster hero, a much-loved scoundrel who lived in the olden days and broke all laws, is always wakinu after some particularly fantastic escapade of his has been retold. Wakinu is used during a fight as an appropriate term against one's enemies. Secondly, 593 196 831 no brother can hear his sister sworn at or hear obscene speech in her presence, such as is very common otherwise. Ordinarily, when a man's anger rises, he immediately bursts into an almost pyrotechnical display of abuse, most of it centering around sex, breaking of incest taboos, peculiarities of the genitalia, irregularities in the sexual act between men and women, et cetera. The aversion to hearing or using such profanity in front of a sister is called "mirriri" (ear-thing). It really means, "My ear can't hear obscenity in front of my sister." An older man said, "It is just the same as if I had been hit on the head with a club when I hear that." Another said, "My heart jumps and stops, jumps and stops, when I hear that mirriri."

602 578 195 Malambunu had come home and found his food unprepared by his wife, Dangra. A quarrel resulted in which he called her matamakmi (incestuous). She did not swear at him. A near-clan brother of Dangra, Badunga, heard the swearing and became very angry. He gathered a bundle of spears, hooked them one by one to his spear-thrower, and threw them at a large number of the women in the native camp, including Dangra. An investigation showed that every one of the women at whom he threw was called yeppa by him.

Balli, an adolescent girl, called her own mother dalardumaru (big vagina).

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Natjurili, a near-clan brother of the mother, heard the girl use this term. He, too, threw spears at all his sisters, tribal and blood. 602 578

A general camp fight was on; Dimala, who wanted the combatants to stop, cried, "Stop swearing at each other. If you don't stop calling each other names, I'll have to go throw spears at all my sisters." 196

If Malambunu had sworn at Badunga's near brother as he had at Badunga's sister, there would have been a quarrel and possible fight; such swearing between men, however, only happens when there is already a fight on. If Balli had sworn at Natjurili's mother or daughter, he would have done nothing.[1]

The person who swears most frequently at a man's sister is her husband, especially in a connubial quarrel. The husband is ego's dué, with whom he has one of the strongest relationships. 593 578 605

Yeppa ⟷ *Yeppa* (sister ⟷ sister)

There are the following varieties of this relationship: (1) sisters from the same father and mother and having the same husband; (2) sisters from the same father and mother but having different husbands; (3) sisters having the same husband but different fathers and mothers; (4) wives of brothers of one clan; (5) near-clan sisters; and (6) distant-clan sisters. 593 602

There are no taboos between sisters. Younger sisters are disciplined and protected by the older ones. The older ones also teach the younger ones how to make baskets, earn their living, and do the things they should as members of Murngin culture.

Bapa ⟷ *Gatu* (father ⟷ child)

There are five varieties of this relationship, in the following order of importance: (1) the blood father; (2) his brothers; (3) fathers more remote than the first two, but in the same clan; (4) fathers from nearby clans; and (5) fathers from remote clans.

A definite distinction is made between actual father and father's brothers, blood sons and brothers' sons; between father's own brothers and clan brothers of the father. Clan solidarity sharply divides fathers within and outside of the clan. There may or may not be a difference in the emotional attitude of a father and son from a nearby clan and a father and son from a more distant clan. The usual behavior between father and son generally does not hold between a distant son and

[1] There is some evidence that the father is also supposed to participate in the mirriri, but this feeling must be very weak since no concrete evidence was collected and it was spoken of but once by a Murngin man, and then only in passing.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 602 father; frequently, because of the opportunities of competition for women among distant groups, there are actual animosity and warfare.

Since older and younger brothers are clearly differentiated by separate terms, wawa and yukiyuko, and have a definitely regulated behavior toward each other, the relationship of bapa and his sons must be considered from this point of view. Does a father distinguish between older and younger sons, even though there is no term to express these functional differences and all sons are gatu? The answer is decidedly in the affirmative, as will be seen below from the chronologically ordered account of the normal relationship from the period before birth of the son until the death of both father and son.

262 When a "married" man has no children, he must observe a number of food taboos until a wife announces pregnancy. He cannot eat, whether he or another kills or gathers them, porcupine, emu eggs, snake eggs, iguana eggs, turkey eggs, crayfish, large barrimundi, or [B51] crabs, until he acquires the right by old age. A child's birth removes all these taboos, but the child must be his, not a brother's.

781 842 843 The ideas surrounding birth give the father a prominent part in the procedure. The various spirits of the unborn and the dead live with the clan totems in the clan wells. As stated, a father dreams that the child comes to him, asking where it can find its mother, and enters the mother's vagina. The next day the man informs the wife that she is going to have a child, or, if it is his first child, to test the value of his dream he may keep it a secret. The natives believe these dreams are always true since a wife usually tells her husband a few days later that she has felt the movements of a child within her. The husband knows then that his dream is true. He sharpens his spears, rewraps his [777] spear-thrower, and prepares to go hunting, for he knows that he will be successful because his child has come from the totemic spirits within the water, bringing good luck with it. He kills an abundance [262] of game and brings it home. A slight ceremony takes place, after which he may eat all food, for, according to Murngin thought his wife having conceived, he is now a father. This removal of taboos on his diet furnishes one of the reasons for a man's eagerness to have children.

781 842 A child comes from its father's well on the father's clan territory, for clan descent is patrilineal. Sometimes the father may be in another part of the country and may dream that the child came from the well of the local clan. Then it would inherit not only its own clan's totems, but also those of the other, yet it would be a member only of his father's clan. The second water hole must belong to the same moiety

1; Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

It gives the father added bonds with waku (his sister's son) because the latter becomes husband to the daughter; it strengthens his position with daughter's son, who is waku to ego's son. A man prefers a son, however, because of his value in the constant tribal feuds, not only through his own assistance and the aid he brings to his relations (as, of course, the daughter does through her marriage), but also because almost the entire ceremonial life of the father's clan and tribe is centered around the males. A son inherits the right to perform certain dances through his father and never through his mother. By a son's initiation into the various ceremonies the father's social participation is further increased as it would not be if the child were a daughter.*

Each clan has ceremonial leaders for one or all of the ceremonies it owns. The leadership is inherited by the oldest son if he is old enough. If not, the deceased father's next oldest brother inherits the right until the son is old enough; or at the death or senility of the second brother the son becomes leader. The course taken depends largely upon the personalities of the two men, but in all events the son is looked upon as the heir to these rights. Such ceremonial leadership makes of a person a kind of clan headman.

When a boy is to be circumcised (at from six to nine years of age), it is the father who decides the type of initiation ceremony. The other old men of the tribe confer with him as to time, place, and other arrangements. The father and the mother make presents to the man who paints the child's body in preparation for the initiation. The father is one of those who teach his son how to hunt, fight, and conduct himself in the best possible way in the practical affairs of life. If the father is a ceremonial leader he instructs his son in the routine of songs, dances, and words that make up the great ceremonies.

Before the actual circumcision the neophyte is sent on a journey through the country of the various clans to inform the people of the coming ceremony and to collect presents. The father may refuse to send his son if he wishes; or, if he wants the boy to go, he may order him to leave and to take a certain route. No one else could do this.

A father never corrects his children. This is left to other kin (see mari, nati, et cetera).

Fathers and sons often cooperate in making a canoe. A son must always acquiesce in a father's request for the use of a canoe, or of any of the son's property. A father occupies a place much like an older

*For a full account of the individual's change of status, see Chapter IV, Age Grading.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

brother's, and, with the father's senility recognized, the oldest son assumes his place as head of the family; at least he is looked to for guidance by the brothers and sisters. 593

Before circumcision, when a small boy finds a wild bees' nest, the honey of which is a greatly prized delicacy, he goes to tell his father (mari, gawel, and others, too), who will open the hollow tree for the boy and allow him with the aid of his small brothers to eat all of it, but will not eat it himself nor allow any but the brothers to touch it. This rule is very important, for it rests upon a magical idea that the boy will have good luck in the hunt and in later finding large nests. Should a man eat any of the boy's first wild bees' honey, a father would consider this more than sufficient cause to fight him. It is the father who takes the initiative in protecting the small boy's interest. 593 222 858 [777]

When a child, particularly a son, becomes ill, the father either treats him magically or uses native remedies. Should a mother neglect her child, or through misadventure allow it to be harmed, most fathers would become angry and beat her, and in some cases try to kill her. 593 855 152

When a son dies, the actual father and his brothers lead in the mourning ceremonies; when a father dies, all the varieties of sons within the limits of the clan cooperate in leading these ceremonies. When the bones of a man are exhumed after burial, it is the father who opens the grave and, with the help of the son's dué (the father's waku), cleans the putrid flesh off the bones. 764

The death of a son is a great social loss to the father, since there is no one to take his place; but the death of a father is felt less severely by the children. If the children are small, they and their mother pass through the levirate to the father's younger brother. If the children are grown, the father usually has become very old and his death causes them little social loss. The death of a father in our own society creates a greater social maladjustment than in the native society. The Murngin children have been calling the father's brother father, and, further, their behavior toward this younger brother of their father has differed but slightly from that toward their own father. The mother does not go back to her own but continues in the same social group. There is no change in the social adjustment of the children or other members of the kinship system. The personal loss of a father to the family and to society is usually keenly felt, as is the death of sons by a father. When a son dies a father beats his own head and attempts to wound himself to show his sorrow. 768 [152]

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 Thus far, the whole relationship is one of solidarity, and little potentiality for conflict appears.

835 595 Murngin polygyny usually implies that a man will acquire wives throughout his lifetime. Through the operation of tribal laws a very old man frequently gets young girls for wives. All these women are arndi to the sons, but often young men cohabit clandestinely with their father's younger wives. These must be only tribal relatives of the sons' actual mothers. Even so, the practice is considered wrong, but the feeling is not strong enough to prevent a sexually active son from [578] cohabiting with a father's wife. Should the old man discover it, he would be very angry and reprove his son by calling him a dog, et cetera, but it is generally agreed that an old man beyond the age where sexual life interests him would not "growl very hard."

582 593 835 578 Sometimes when a son is too young to marry, a father may take his boy's galle as a wife (she is "small" arndi to the father) to keep someone else from getting her, because of the son's immaturity. The son would call this woman arndi until the father's death; then he inherits her and calls her galle. Any children born to her by the father would be called yukiyuko or yeppa and not gatu by the son. Frequently a son considers it his right to copulate with her (not openly), which causes the father much pain. The younger man would have abuse heaped on his head, but there would never be a fight over such a problem, or any other, between a father and son so long as they belonged to the same clan; however, a dispute between "sons" and "fathers" of different clans often leads to fights and occasional killings.

593 606 If a daughter runs away from her husband (the father's waku), the father with the aid of his sons brings the runaway back to his waku. She receives a beating from him and is advised to remain faithful to her husband. Quarreling daughters who are the wives of one man are instructed by their father to live in peace, for he considers the welfare of his waku of the greatest importance. He and her brothers [557] also keep his daughter's totemic name for her since she is not allowed to know it.

603 602 *Marikmo* ⟷ *Maraitcha* (diramo and mielk)* (father's father; father's father's sister ⟷ son's son; son's daughter; brother's son's son; brother's son's daughter)

This relationship conforms to the father-children type, having the same five varieties as found in the bapa-gatu relationship.

* *Diramo*, man, male; *mielk*, woman, female.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

595 the son. A dué likes many wives because he tires of cohabiting with
554 one and because such multiplicity creates more sons and daughters, so that he will have more waku, dué, and galle, with stronger bonds between him and them.

513 When in camp a woman sleeps with her back to her husband. If
833 intercourse takes place it is in this position so that no one can be aware of what they are doing.

A dué and galle never copulate during a woman's pregnancy, lest
843 the child be born dead or die early in infancy, the mother's milk being
834 soured by her husband's semen. If a child is born dead the parents are blamed. If a baby dies, the brother and father of the mother criticize
620 their actions throughout the camp in loud voices for her and other members of the tribe to hear. Since sexual intercourse has usually occurred between dué and galle after what they feel should have been the regulated time, they say nothing and do not resent the criticism.

After a child is born the woman and man wait several days before
846 resuming sexual relations. The wife goes through a short ceremony that is both therapeutic and ritualistic. She enters the bush with a female relative such as momo, mari, or mokul bapa, and places some stones on a fire. When these are hot she squats over the fire and the other woman throws water over the stones. The steam is supposed to heal, cleanse and close her uterus and make it small again.

A woman during this period sleeps facing her husband, who does
846 not try to touch her but waits until she turns from him and starts
833 making casual conversation. He realizes then that she wants him. After his first intercourse with his wife following the birth of a child, the husband always rises early and bathes himself. If he did not, he would look like an animal to the other men and feel ashamed before them.[11]

593 A woman gathers the small game, nuts, bulbs, yams, and other vegetable food, as well as all shell food for the family. A man always
222 has first right to the food brought by her. She and her daughters have
462 eaten all they wish while gathering it. A wife usually cooks the food
262 she has brought for her husband. A large part of a family's larder is contributed by the wife. Big game is supplied by the men, who also bring in fish and large sea animals such as turtle, porpoise, dugong and shark.

[11] There is considerable evidence that there is a comparatively strong taboo on sexual relations between man and wife after the man has seen a totem the first time. It is said that the ceremonial leader for the totem would be so angry that he would attempt to spear the culprit.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

waku and his clan; (2) the strength of the far-off waku's clan; (3) the near waku's having a number of wives and no younger brothers; and (4) the possibility that the waku may want to go without wives. There are two cases of this last on record. The old men usually try to get a man to marry and marry properly. Not only is their personal pressure felt by a man who does not wish to marry, but the whole impact of society is placed against him in hundreds of direct and indirect ways. It would be a strong man with an intense dislike of women who could retain his bachelorhood against such odds.[12]

The reader may assume from this account of illegal unions that marriage is a very unstable institution. Such is not the case. Although love affairs are common, a lifelong marriage either of a galle mielk to one dué, or to him and his younger brothers through the levirate, is the normal thing. Murngin society could not exist were this not true.

From the cases of unfaithfulness and the mechanical manner of acquiring spouses through the relationship of the parents, conjugal love might appear impossible. Although rare, it does exist. The ideal wife and husband are those who remain faithful to their spouses; on the other hand, a promiscuous woman or man is disapproved of even though not openly condemned.

To illustrate a man's affection for his wife: Mun-yir-yir had had a magically powerful totemic string given him to keep preparatory to its being placed upon another's totemic emblem. No woman may see or even hear of such a thing. His galle was burning bush for bandicoots. The fire burned and destroyed the string. All his clansmen and those of the man to whom the string belonged were extremely angry. Women had been killed before for such an offense. An old man said

[12] Occasionally one hears accounts of a number of unmarried men collecting in a group of five or six, going out into the jungle with one woman and having group sexual relation with her. One woman I knew of had done this several times; the people severely disapproved of her. She seemed a woman of insatiable sexual appetite and was continually in trouble because of it. She also seemed to stimulate all the men sexually and had a greater interest for them than some of the other women who might have been obtained. Sometimes a youth who is having an affair with an older woman will tell his friends and have them accompany him to his assignation. The other men remain back when they arrive. According to one of the accounts given me, the woman says, "Who is with you?" He replies, "My friends." She says, "Do not bring your friends, I only like you, I only want to have you." The boy says, "No, they are my friends. I'll have you first, then they can." She objects, and he says, "But I feel very sorry for them. Maybe if you don't play with them they will come use black magic on you." He keeps on talking like that and the woman listens and agrees to his proposal. There seems to be considerable evidence that what is called nymphomania among modern women also exists among these aboriginal peoples.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 688 152 at the time that it was to his clan as though she had killed a strong man. Her husband said nothing, but hurried her to a mission on a nearby island to shield her against possible attacks of his own people. He risked being injured himself for this, but he was more concerned for her. This was not merely because of her economic or child-bearing value. He had an older wife, who had borne him a daughter, whom he loved even more than his younger wife; and the older woman was still a sexual mate and a very able food-gatherer. Yet he told me he would have let them kill the old woman, for she was "rubbish," but that he liked the young galle "too much" and he could not let them kill her.

593 578 837 One further instance may be cited. One of Benaitjimaloi's three wives, the oldest, was notorious for her promiscuity. She had not only been beaten by him, but at one time all the people of a camp had thrashed her for her misconduct. Benaitjimaloi had acquired her by a runaway union. She had been caught in a sexual relation with Bindjerpuma. The husband fought the lover and then said to everybody that he was tired of her continual affairs, was through with her, and that she could go where she pleased. Then he gave her a thorough beating. One of the older men in the tribe, and one of the most intelligent, said, "He won't give her away. I see inside his head. He beat her after he said he'd thrown her away; that shows that he likes that woman too much." Benaitjimaloi kept his wife.

595 484 342 462 A man and all his wives live in the same camp. If he is going on a long journey he usually leaves some of them with their parents, taking only one with him. When a house is to be built the women usually construct the ordinary windbreak type, but sometimes a man helps them. The husband brings in the heavy stringy bark for the small, dome-shaped house used by most of the people during the rainy season. The women keep the house clean. It is felt that the house belongs to the man and the women.

595 578 The wives live in a fair degree of amiability, but there is sometimes jealousy over their husband.

Doring, a man past middle age, but still very active, had three wives, of whom Opossum was the youngest. He complained one day:

"My wives growl at each other all the time. The two old ones are good friends, but they are jealous of Opossum. They say to her, 'Why don't you get another man? This man is our husband. He made our children come. He belongs to us. He doesn't belong to you.' Opossum says, 'Where am I to go? My other dué are too old; I'd be the same as dead if I lived with

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

one of them.' The two old ones say, 'Your first man is dead already.'" [Dorng's brother died and he got Opossum through the levirate.] His old wives were very pleasant and kind to him, but Opossum was a scold. "When I want to sleep with one of the old sisters at night," he said, "Opossum won't go to sleep as she should. I wait and wait; sometimes morning comes, and that woman watches and won't go to sleep. All right, I wait no longer. I play with her. When I do, Opossum growls at me. The old sisters go to sleep, but sometimes they laugh at me when I play with Opossum."

When Mahkarolla's gawel and mokul gave him their second daughter, the first daughter, who was his wife, immediately quarreled with her younger sister and asked her what right she had to be sleeping with Mahkarolla, who belonged only to her. The first wife said nothing to the husband about her opposition to her sister. When her parents heard of it they said to their older daughter, "She is just the same as you. You are our daughter and she is our daughter. You have him for a husband, and we have given her to him, and now she has him for a husband. She is your young sister; you'll now have someone to look out for the wood for you, and she can help you gather food." This stopped all criticism, and the two sisters lived together as wives to Mahkarolla with the utmost amiability and friendship.

This is the usual situation in Murngin marriage when two sisters from one family marry a man. The older sister has more power than the younger one. Trouble between wives is only likely when he marries into two clans distant from each other.

A wife has considerable independence. She is not the badly treated woman of the older Australian ethnologists' theories. She usually asserts her rights. Women are more vocal than men in Murngin society. Frequently they discipline their husbands by refusing to give them food when the men have been away too long and the wives fear they have had a secret affair.

Husbands and wives are strongly united through their children, for both are very fond of their offspring and extremely demonstrative in their affection. To a European, the children are almost intolerable in their demands on their parents and those around them.

As an indication of connubial solidarity, the following is presented. A small child had died and been buried. A day or two after this a camp fight developed only a short distance from the child's grave. The voices of the mother and father could be heard above the din, first pleading with the combatants to stop, and then angrily cursing

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 775 15v the people engaged in the trouble because it is believed a spirit of the dead should not be disturbed by fights until after the last mourning ceremony. It was as father and mother that the two protested, but evidently through the child there was a greater bond of solidarity between them.

605 304 When a young dué is circumcised, his near galle cut their thighs "to show their sorrow." A galle always carries her dué's bones after they have been exhumed.

605 *Dué Diramo* ⟷ *Galle Diramo* (father's sister's son ⟷ mother's brother's son)

There are as many variations in the dué-diramo and galle-diramo relationship as in the dué-diramo and galle-mielk type.

[607] This is one of the strongest relationships between men. The actual brothers of ego's wife (who is the daughter of mother's brother) and the consanguine father's sister's son (who is the husband of ego's sister) have the strongest bond of any of the male dué and galle. Each [431] always comes to the other for assistance when he gets into trouble. When a man is giving presents to gawel for gawel's daughter, he also offers them to galle diramo because he is brother to the wife.

When Narnarngo got himself into trouble with Bengaliwe his dué immediately came to his assistance (see page 86). This is only one instance of scores recorded by the writer.

Dué and galle engage in many enterprises together, such as canoe building. The bond between them finds a full expression in all the everyday activities of life. When a man is in trouble and needs a good supply of weapons it is always his brothers, and his dué and galle, who lend him extra spears and clubs, and who come to his assistance.

605 582 Male dué and galle have added strength given to their relationship through indirect ties; dué's son and galle's daughter will later be husband and wife; and galle will later be, or is, gawel to dué's son, just as dué is waku to galle's father. This last relationship is one of the most binding in Murngun society, and by indirect relationship it occurs twice in the reciprocity that exists between galle and dué: dué's son is waku to galle, and dué is waku to galle's father.

605 The full position of dué diramo and galle diramo cannot be realized until one studies the behavior of yeppa and her brother and her position as the wife of dué. The dué's position therefore includes the following relationships: (1) to his wife; (2) to galle's father; and (3) his son's relationship of waku to dué's galle. Every one of these elements

I: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

604 The gawel and waku-mielk relationship is not very strong. The
835 man would not ordinarily copulate with her in a clandestine affair. If he were caught he would be called a dog or other animal because of intimacy with too near a kinswoman.

Arndi ⟷ *Waku* (diramo and mielk) (mother ⟷ child)

593 There are two types of kinship in this reciprocal—mother and son,
604 and mother and daughter. Each has a number of varieties according to the closeness of relation and the consequently stronger bonds. They are: (1) actual mother, and her sons and daughters; (2) mother's sisters who are wives of the actual father and his brothers; (3) mothers, and children from nearby clans. There is another type of arndi who is ego's son's mate. She is near or distant according to the blood or tribal connection.

The essential element in the relationship is that arndi is the mother of waku. Her sisters are considered near mothers; they may be one's father's wives or near father's wives.

593 There are no taboos between a mother and her children except
835 sexual ones. Even here a waku often has an affair with a distant arndi. This is considered wrong, but it occurs. One's father's arndi would
582 come from nati and mari, while one's son's arndi would have to come from galle and mari. Except under rare circumstances there would be no possible chance of a son's marrying a possible mate for a father, just as the opposite union would not be allowed.

853 A mother suckles her own children but her sisters often help if she
847 happens to have two babies whose ages are close together. Sometimes a mother kills her newborn babe because it has followed too closely on her others and she has not enough milk to feed it. This would be done without the knowledge of the father, who would be most angry if he knew it. If a baby dies when born, the father is suspicious of his wife, believing that she might have smothered it in the bush.

847 Abortion, practiced for the same reason as infanticide, is not infrequent. The pregnant woman's sisters exert pressure on her abdomen with knees and hands.

847 When twins are born one is always killed, sometimes the second.
845 But usually, if they are boy and girl, the latter is put to death. Waltjimi's wife killed the boy and allowed the girl to live. There was much indignation in the camp, for it was said that a boy made a people strong, while a girl only caused trouble. A woman kills a twin because it makes her feel like a dog to have a litter instead of one baby.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

604 855 When a mother goes away with the father for a trip to distant kinspeople, the older children are left with the mother's sisters, the mother's mother, or the mother's brother. The children turn to the near mothers for food and care with the same feeling as to their own mother.

593 628 A mother is deeply fond of her children. Maritcha saved the life of a young man about fifteen years old when some of the former's clansmen plotted the boy's death. The mother heard of this. Maritcha's clan and her own had had a feud for many years, yet from gratitude she attempted to help Maritcha and stop her own people from fighting him at a later time.

841 When a girl has her first menses the mother helps paint her and take care of her.

861 626 543 There is constant tribal pressure on a mother to be good to her children. No Murngin mother would dare correct her children in the manner of a European woman, for she would be considered cruel and inhuman. Camp gossip and opinion would uniformly condemn her and liken her to an animal. On the other hand, there is less restraint on a son and daughter concerning their mother than in our own society. They frequently curse her, and there is no taboo on the conversation used before her.

604 606 Little arndi (son's wife) occupies a different place in the kinship system, although the general behavior toward her would be the same as toward the true mother (see page 72). Waku in this case would also be a different person. He would be father's sister's husband or husband's father to small arndi.

If a small arndi's husband runs away she goes back to her mokul bapa (husband's mother) until he returns or until she has been given to a younger brother of the husband.

603 *Nati* ⟷ *Kaminyer* (diramo and mielk) (mother's father ⟷ daughter's child)

There are two types of this relationship since there are a female and a male kaminyer and only a male nati. There are five varieties of nati: (1) gawel's and arndi's true father; (2) brothers of this nati; (3) brothers of momo married to marikmo; (4) near nati; and (5) distant nati.

603 835 Nati always feeds his male kaminyer, but not the female because he and she would be afraid people might think he was trying to seduce her. He would also be afraid that she might think so herself. The

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

core of the whole structure functioning at one time. Starting from the lower left-hand corner, kutara is seen making gifts to ego's waku for his daughters; waku is sending gifts to ego (waku's gawel) for his daughters; ego is performing the same exchange with gawel, while the latter is in a similar position with ego's mari. Thus we see running diagonally throughout the entire kinship system the reciprocation based on the exchange of daughters and compensated for it by gifts, while at the same time new families are being created by the change of the daughter and sister of the older family into the wife and mother of the newly created family (see Chart II).

This same small pattern of behavior (mother's brother ⟷ sister's son) creates other diagonal lines, the two most important of which are the line dumungur ⟷ gurrong ⟷ dué ⟷ bapa ⟷ nati; and the line, kaminyer ⟷ gatu ⟷ galle ⟷ marelker ⟷ natji walker. These lines are also exchanging women for presents, as ego's own line does. To see this clearly, let the reader consider bapa (father) in Chart II as ego, and it will be seen that from dumungur to nati there are people in the same relationship as kutara to mari.

There is always the danger that this reciprocity will be broken; that gawel will allow his daughter to go to another relative than waku; that a series of runaway marriages, wrong marriages, or wife-stealing will break these lateral and diagonal bonds, thereby breaking the relationship system.

Further, the organized antagonism felt by the family whose unity is injured by the removal of a marrying member may result in open conflict that would involve the larger interclan unities, destroying the social structure since its whole basis is the kinship organization.[10]

Custom of the Mir-ri-ri

To discover additional methods for saving the structure from destruction because of asocial actions and to get at the real meaning of some customs that heretofore have appeared inexplicable, let us re-

[10] This organized antagonism which exists between gawel and waku and their respective families is brought out clearly in the myth commonly told of Jabiru and Jau (see Appendix VIII). The attitude of strong solidarity of the daughter toward her father should be noticed; the criteria she applies to her husband in his relations with her father are the normal Murngin ones. The telling of this myth always causes much merriful laughter. The events of the first part of the story might easily happen, but the men fighting would not occur. The whole myth gives a series of explanations of how animals took their present form, and it also symbolically expresses the antagonisms and standards that apply for son-in-law and father-in-law.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 examine the Murngin kinship behavior centered around sisters and daughters.

[584] Fathers and brothers treat a daughter and sister alike in that (1) they decide to which of her dués she will belong; (2) they stand responsible for her loss by runaway marriage, et cetera; (3) they beat her for misconduct; (4) they supply another daughter and sister to her dué if she dies or is sterile; and (5) they come to her assistance if she is excessively mistreated by dué.

The above largely summarizes a father's behavior toward a daughter, but gives only a part of a brother's relationship with his sister. Except for the fifth case, the father and brother, so far as they obey tribal law, do all they can to force the daughter and sister into a permanent marriage and to censor the dué-galle relationship. The necessity of keeping a woman with her husband to protect the kinship structure of Murngin society is thus clearly felt by all people, including the members of her own family and clan, whose structures have been damaged by her going to a new family and clan.

593 628 614 The fifth element of behavior indicates a possibility of strife. No brother or father would interfere with a husband chastising his wife; indeed, they would help him. But if the wife were being brutally treated, or were killed for no just cause, they would interfere, which would usually mean a fight. Such an assumption of responsibility for the sister's and daughter's rights shows that she is still considered a part of her kinsmen's clan and family. It is only under the most extreme provocation that members of a woman's clan would act; no instance was recorded by the author. In case of a husband's brutality, his own clansmen apply pressure to prevent trouble with her clan, and also because of a feeling that such conduct is wrong.

593 614 682 If a brother killed his sister, no direct action would be taken by the clan, clan solidarity preventing it. This contrasts with the feeling of her own clan if her husband should kill her. It demonstrates that fundamentally she is considered as belonging to her own group, not to her husband's, even after she has been taken by the latter's clan.

593 Yet a brother calls his sister "wakinu," i.e., without relatives; and if her husband or anyone else swears at her in her brother's presence the latter throws spears at her and at all his other sisters, even though they are not involved in the quarrel. This behavior seemingly contradicts the above statement. There are several possible explanations. It might be said that he throws spears at her because he believes the swearing to be due to some fault of hers. A brief investigation proves

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

this to be untrue. Balli called her mother by an obscene term because the latter was attempting to stop her from having an illegal relationship with a man who stood in the wrong kinship position to her. Natjurili knew this when he threw spears at her mother (his sister); still he felt impelled to throw them.

Possibly the structure of the kinship system will explain this seemingly anomalous behavior of a brother to his sister; or, to put it another way, structure can explain the function.

Yeppa does belong to her clan and family, but for most practical purposes her family and clan lose her to the husband's. If she is called "rubbish" and without relatives it means: "We put no real value on this woman, we have thrown her out of our clan, really she was never in it. Our family and clan have not been damaged by her loss as our sister and daughter since she is wakinu and does not belong to them, but we do value her as a wife and mother among your people; hence the various guarantees we make of keeping her with you. We don't want her back, we want to keep the relationship permanent; that is why we say, 'She is without relatives.'"

When dué swears at yeppa, and wawa or yukiyuko throws spears at her and her sisters, it is of course absurd that she, the offended, should suffer rather than the person responsible. The Murngin know this; they say, "It is silly, but when I hear those words at my sister I must do something. I throw spears at her."

In view of the feeling against hearing filthy speeches before one's sisters, the following structural interpretation seems to throw the most light on this behavior.

Yeppa is a member of one's own immediate family and patrilineal line. The emotional ties to her are very strong. She is from babyhood to childhood loved and petted by one's father. She is her brother's companion before he reaches the age of circumcision; thereafter, being felt to be such a near relative and with such a strong emotional reciprocation, she is of necessity taboo. This is the woman that a brother throws spears at for an act of which she is the victim. The interpretation is simple. Her patrilineal and family bond are very strong; everyone knows that in a final test a brother would fight his own dué if he went too far when mistreating her. Given the fact that a man cannot hear his sister sworn at, he must choose either to defend his sister and fight her husband,[17] or to do nothing. If he chose the first, it

[17] The situation in the relationship ego ⟷ sister's husband exists in all ego's other major relationships; to attack any clan relative would cause trouble.

1; Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

593 607 201 would immediately endanger and possibly destroy for a time the whole lateral structure of his clan's kinship with the rest of the tribe. A fight with a dué of another clan would immediately call clan solidarity into action; all the brother's brothers, sons, fathers, et cetera, would necessarily come to his aid, just as these same relatives of dué would help dué, so that a general fight would result. A general re-exchange of women by forceful means would be a very likely possibility. Obviously only the most extreme circumstances would force such action.

Doing nothing is conceivable, but extremely difficult if the emotions are highly aroused by the mirriri. It is out of keeping with general Murngin behavior not to express an emotion socially. Therefore an entirely different possibility has been seized upon and socialized. The sister is treated as though she were her husband, and spears are thrown at her as though she and not he were the culprit. This saves any trouble between the clans.

The custom of throwing spears gives ritualistic expression to the wakinu concept, and to its opposite. The woman has been called a person without relatives, something actually impossible in the social life. She is rubbish to her family when the question arises whether she is to stay in her new capacity as mother or go back to her own clan. When brothers throw spears at their sisters, they demonstrate that she is not a part of her own family, even though dué calls her by terms slandering her as well as her family and clan; they will not act against the husband or his clan. On the other hand, the custom expresses extreme displeasure at hearing one's sister abused. "This woman is called sister by me, I cannot hear obscenity used against her. I throw spears at her to show my dislike, because if I throw them at you, it would cause trouble out of proportion to the cause of it."

A man throws spears at his sister not only when her dué swears at her but when anyone else does. Because of clan solidarity, he could not throw them at any member of his own clan except yeppa, which is allowed by the wakinu concept.

593 201 The remaining problem is: Why does a man throw spears at *all* his sisters instead of confining his act to the one sworn at? All women who stand in the relation of sister to ego, no matter how distant the clan, are treated in exactly the same manner (not spoken to, touched, et cetera); the mirriri falls under this class of behavior, both as belonging to a general pattern and as an extension of the behavior that comes from the feeling surrounding a blood sister. Also, throwing spears at

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

all sisters accentuates the ritualistic nature of the spear-throwing. Emotionally, throwing at several women instead of one is more satisfactory since the feelings linked with the mirriri are intense and need much activity to vent them.

Mari ⟷ Kutara Solidarity

As has been said, the lateral structure of the Murngin kinship system is potentially weak. The gawel-waku reciprocal is no exception, because of the change of daughter to wife and because gawel may not give his daughter to his proper waku. This relationship is most decidedly strengthened by the addition of the mari-marelker and gurrong-kutara lines of descent. The reason is simple. Ego's mari is gawel to ego's own gawel. This places ego's gawel in the same weak position toward ego's most generous and helpful friend (mari) as that in which ego finds himself toward his own gawel. Many natives have been recorded as saying the following: "Mari is the boss of my mokul rumeru and gawel and helps me get my galle." Through the mari-kutara tie there is strength between gawel and waku, so that a solid bond is established from mari in the second ascending generation and second lateral line to the right of ego, and kutara in the second descending generation and second lateral line to the left of ego.

Kutara inherits mari's personal names, hence an identity of personality in names. Since names are of the utmost importance in Murngin thought and there is a feeling of sameness about things bearing the same name, the great solidarity between mari and kutara can be understood. Even after mari's death he still comes to kutara's aid. He is an eternal source of health and comfort to kutara. The latter, usually a younger man, is also a great help to mari, for he can give physical aid in time of war, is an active huntsman, and, all in all, usually participates in the social life as a mature male still in his prime. Moreover, they belong to the same moiety, and frequently to the same clan, which adds to the strength of the positive relationship.

An examination of the kinship structure demonstrates the reasons for this solidarity. Mari's kutara uses the term gawel for the man who is in the relationship of waku to mari. In other words, the person to whom kutara stands in the weakest relationship, his gawel, is a social personality with whom kutara's mari is in exactly the opposite relationship—mari is strong with kutara's gawel where kutara is weak. Mari's relationship in this case is positive while kutara's is negative.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

make quite a point of carrying their personal baskets under their arms in the manner of mature men.

When large animals such as kangaroos, sea turtles, or emus are harpooned or speared and are being prepared for the stone fires by the older men, the little boys stand about and watch, edging as close as they can and being constantly warned to get back. Meanwhile they quarrel among themselves over the tidbits given them, e.g., the shells of the turtles from which they pick bits of meat.

A boy remains with his family of orientation until he is six or eight years of age, when he is circumcised, leaves his family, and goes to live with the boys of his own age and those who are older in a male group presided over by an older man (or men) who does not possess a wife. This does not mean that he is not in constant contact with the members of his own family. It is felt to be wrong, however, for the young man to live in his parents' camp after he reaches this age because he will be aware of their sexual relations and will learn ways of behavior not proper for a boy who has not taken a wife. Sexual relations between married people are carried on in the bush in the daytime and in camp at night. In camp they lie in such a position that they will not be noticed by their camp mates. "It is all right for children to watch, for they don't know what's happening, but when a boy gets older he sees, and then he says, 'That's good for me, too.' He goes and gets a young girl, maybe a galle to him, and they go into the bush." "When he stays in the big camp he sees too many women. If sometimes you see a small boy from the men's camp sit down in the camp with the women, he hasn't learned which way to behave proper."

The sister taboos are put into force at this same period and are active deterrents in keeping the boy away from his own camp, since the young girls remain with their parents until they are taken by their spouses.

The youths are supposed to eat in their (boys', unmarried men's) camp and sleep there, not going around with women. The boys' camp is the place for them to learn the proper etiquette in their conduct with men and women. A boy is not supposed to look "hard" at a woman. Whenever a man stares at a woman he is thought to have designs upon her. "If a boy looks hard at that girl she says to herself, 'What does he look at me for that way? I think he wants to play with me.' She goes and talks then and makes trouble."

When the younger circumcised boys are put in the unmarried men's

2: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1955
OI17 Murngin OI17

I. "BASIC" LINES OF DESCENT

The kinship system then is, as Radcliffe-Brown has mentioned (1951:48), based on three "basic" patri-lines, i.e., three classes of male relatives in the second ascending generation, the MARI, MARIMO and NGADI. M.M.B. is distinguished from F.F., but M.F. and F.M.B. are classed together. The inclusion of NGADIWALGUR, as a special variety of NGADI, gives a secondary patri-line. Radcliffe-Brown has discussed the "matri-lines" stemming from these, and has demonstrated that the existence of the term NGADIWALGUR with its reciprocal DUMUNGUR makes it necessary to have seven vertical columns. There are three basic patrilineal lines of descent and three basic "matrilineal" lines of descent: on this structural feature we agree with Radcliffe-Brown (1951:49). There are, however, certain differences: see Table 1. Although there are three basic patri-lines plus four secondary patri-lines; and three basic "matri-lines" plus four secondary "matri-lines," only one patri-line and one "matri-line" are of immediate importance to EGO. Patri-line O is significant to an EGO because through it he inherits his linguistic group (*mada*), and thus his clan (*mala*) position. The moiety too is patrilineal; through this line he inherits his ritual position in the sacred ceremonies, together with sections of the relevant mythology and songs, sacred emblems and poles, feathered strings, and sacred uterus dilly bag, his section of the linguistic group and clan totemic patterns. His ritual status is determined through his membership in this patri-line, which includes male siblings of his F., F.F., and male children of the latter. (The females of this line also inherit a ritual status, but I shall not discuss this here.)

This line is the important *bubaru*, the male descent line the sacred line through which a man prenatally receives his spirit, and into which when dead he merges as an ancestor. Magic too passes down this line, and all members of it are of the one moiety.

The "matri-line" (X in Table 1), cutting diagonally across the constant vertical "flow" of the patri-line, signifies a "submerged" line of descent. It is relevant to an EGO, but not to his father. It signifies too the importance of the line of his mother, who through her brother has been able to hand on to her son some of her acknowledged ritual status. She herself, because lacking in executive authority, cannot hand on such knowledge as she may have, but through the intense emotional siblings-of-opposite-sex bond (the strongest tabooed tie of all) she is able to delegate this duty to her brother, EGO's M.B. Consequently, EGO has a place in the patri-line of his M.B.; but this is actually of secondary importance, because his M.B. is of the opposite moiety.

But down this "matri-line" of EGO passes the knowledge and ritual status which skips a generation with the m. and M.B. and comes directly, so to speak, from EGO's M.M.B. to EGO himself, for these two are of the same moiety, i.e., from the M.M.B. to his Sr.D.S.

This is the important *maribula* line, of the same moiety as EGO's patri-line. To all intents and purposes it is identified with EGO's own line, and the rights and privileges which he inherits through it may be the same as those

[text continues on p. 87]

31 Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Ol17 Muragin Ol17

The skull,[21] which also has been painted with its totemic design, is placed in a string carrying-bag. Both the skull and the bark coffin containing the bones are carried from one camp to another by a near female relative of the dead man and suitably mourned over, so that the dead spirit will be happy. At night the bark coffin is placed on a pair of forked sticks, and the skull, in its carrying-bag, hung on a nearby tree.

(iii) *The Final Burial*

At the end of some months, after the old men have decided that the time is ripe for the final disposal of the bones, the brothers of the dead man cut down a hollow tree to make a log coffin and, after taking off the bark, paint on it the totemic design of the dead man.[22]

While the bones are being transferred from the bark to the log coffin the men perform the water dance. A tribal sister then digs a hole in the ground, the log coffin is placed in the hole in an upright position,[23] the earth packed tightly round the base, and the burial rituals are over. Sometimes the small bones of the hands and feet are given to near relatives as mementoes. The skull, being too large to go in the log coffin, is usually broken up and thrown away.

Four bark paintings illustrate the burial rituals: Pl. 100A, the ceremonies at death; Pl. 99D, the cleansing of the bones and the placing in the bark coffin; Pl. 100B, the transference of the bones to the log coffin; and Pl. 101D, a complete sequence of burial.

On Pl. 100A, panel *a*, a newly deceased man is surrounded by mourning women. On panel *b*, the dead man is in his grave (this is an earth burial). On the lower edge of the painting three men are beating their music sticks together and singing, accompanied by a fourth, blowing his drone tube.[24] Above the grave are four dancing women and, on panel *c*, another line of women singing and dancing. The remainder of the painting deals with the journey of the spirit to Nalkuna, the *jiritja* heaven. This will be described later, p. 329.

Plate 99D pictures a ceremony associated with the second phase of the burial ceremonies of a *dua* man, the cleansing of the bones.

In the centre of the painting is the desiccated body resting on the burial platform (short lines on either side). At *a* his mother, *b* his sister, *c* his wife, are stabbing themselves in the scalp with a bone specially sharpened for the occasion. The blood flowing from each woman is indicated by the adjacent cross-hatching. At *d* and *f*, two *dua* men are beating their music sticks and chanting the burial songs, and at *e* a *jiritja* man is blowing the drone tube.

21. See painted skull, Pl. 101C, E.
22. This design is the same as that painted on the body of the dead man throughout his life.
23. See Milingimbi log coffin, Pl. 105A. Those used at Yirrkalla were longer, simpler and without projecting spikes on top.
24. This is a hollow stick, or sometimes a length of bamboo, about two inches in diameter and up to five feet in length, which is blown like a trumpet. Some investigators call them by the European name of didjeridoo.

778
773*
532*

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

Plate 131E illustrates the edible yam, *bualku* or *bawal*.[32] The cross-hatched panels, according to my informants, refer to the marks on the skin of the yam. It is likely, however, that they have a deeper meaning.

The Man, Djunkgao, the Woman, Madalait, and their Ceremonial Objects

I collected two carved and painted figures, one of *Djunkgao* and one of his sister, *Madalait*.[33] In addition, the aborigines made a number of objects belonging to the ceremonies of *Djunkgao* and *Madalait*. They were: the music stick of *Djunkgao*; the music stick of *Madalait*; the digging stick of *Madalait*; a ceremonial object associated with the lizard, *tjunda*; the carved figure of the lizard, *tjunda*.

The Carved Figure of Djunkgao. Plate 131B, C illustrates the obverse and reverse sides of the figure of *Djunkgao*.[34]

On Pl. 131B the bands of cross-hatching at *a* represent *Djunkgao's* camp among the sand-hills at Jelangbara, a locality north of the entrance to Port Bradshaw, and those at *c*, the camp of his sister *Madalait*.[35] The parallel panels at *b* represent the soft sand which ran from under the feet of the brother and sister as they walked about among the drifting sand-hills.

On the reverse side of the figure (Pl. 131C) the meanings of the decorations are similar to those on the obverse. *Djunkgao's* camp is at *a*, and *Madalait's* at *c*. The designs at *b*, *b*, *b*, symbolize both the familiar running sand design and the parallel sand-hills at Jelangbara.

The Carved Figure of Madalait. Plate 131A, D illustrates the obverse and reverse side of the carved figure of *Madalait*.[36] The cross-hatched panels on the shoulders at *a*, Pl. 131D, have two meanings, the lighter coloured panels being the waves breaking on the shore at Bilapinja Island, and the darker panels, lines of seaweed in the water. Both the waves and the seaweed were the subject of a song by *Djunkgao*. The designs on the body at *b* represent the light on the crests of the waves which attracted the attention of *Djunkgao* at Bilapinja Island. The remainder of the painted decorations picture the marks of the dried salt-water on the body of *Madalait*.

The Music Stick of Djunkgao. Plate 132E, F illustrates the music stick[37] used by *Djunkgao* when, in the creation period, he performed a ceremony at Jelangbara, near Port Bradshaw.

32. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), Pl. 6B, p. 43, describe a ceremonial object illustrating the *kauri* yam. This is possibly another representation of the *bualku* or *bawal* yam.

33. Berndt (1952), p. 25, illustrates sketches which, he says, are copies of aboriginal drawings (not reproduced) showing Djanggawul (my *Djunkgao*) with a particularly long penis, and Miralaidj (my *Madalait*) with a greatly elongated clitoris. My carved figures of *Djunkgao* and *Madalait*, Pl. 131A, B, C, D, do not show these characteristics.

34. See p. 273 for complete myth.

35. The aborigines pointed out that both on this figure and on the bark painting (Pl. 85E) the camps of the brother and sister were always some distance apart. In other words, they did not sleep together.

36. See p. 273 for complete myth.

37. These music sticks were made and used in pairs. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), Pl. 1B, p. 46, describe and figure one relating to the goanna (probably the same as my lizard, *tjunda*).

[593]

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

tion are discussed in detail: this aspect will, however, be dealt with later.[7]

Here we are concerned principally with sexual intercourse on the sacred ground, and defloration is incidental; but it does have an important bearing on Kunapipi mythology. (*Vide* Chapter X, Song 45, when it is mentioned that the Mungamunga were "opened" for coitus; the ritual in the Rose River Kunapipi commemorates this mythological event, while other examples could be taken from Yirrkalla mythology to substantiate this rite of defloration.)

On the far right hand side of the drawing are male *gurung* having coitus with their normally tabu-ed female *mukul* (*vide* Chapter IV), as Kunapipi sexual partners (2), while other men (9) await their turn. It is these men who first "open up" the young girls with the boomerang, and then copulate with them. This rite is termed the *nukanmiri*. The drawing of the man and woman performing the sexual act is executed in the stylized traditional manner, so that the two figures merge (2): the man bends forward, grasping his partner at the back so that his arms pass under hers, while the woman clasps him with hands gripped at his back. She is lying on the ground with legs apart, her thighs resting on his hips, and her feet are crossed at his back; *vide* Chapter IV. footnote 14.

Ranged along and around the boomerang (1) are the brothers (3) of the girls and women with whom the men are copulating; they stand with their backs turned. They do not look at their sisters having coitus, in case they should be "shamed" (a manifestation of the deep-rooted local tabu between brother and sister). Instead, they sing while this is taking place, and do not themselves have ceremonial intercourse; their turn comes when the next Kunapipi is performed.

A focal point on the left hand side of the drawing is the *gundaru jelmalandji* (4), held by one man (10), while below it is a row of men (6) who are actual or classificatory husbands to the women having coitus on the opposite section (that is, 2). These husbands (like those at 9) await their turn with women (5) who are the "wives" (actual or otherwise) of the men on the opposite side (9); these women are already having coitus (5), and beside them (11) other men are waiting. Around the *nanggaru* (8) are men (7) dancing the opossum dance: they are the fathers (actual or classificatory) of both groups of women (at 5 and 2).

The fifth drawing,[8] Plate XIII and text figure 6, in black, red, green, blue, yellow and pencil, shows the sacred ground, with its essential emblems and plan: women are awaiting ceremonial intercourse,

7. *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In Chapter IV it was mentioned that only married women attended the Kunapipi ritual of ceremonial copulation; this was a Yirrkalla variant.
8. Reference: No. 3, *Field-Notes*, Book 28, Series B, R. Berndt.

137 zones, *rakai*, the corms of the Tall Spike Rush (*Heleocharis*
262 *sphacelata*), to which reference has already been made, form the staple food. At the same time, communal fishing
226 drives—almost the only large scale hunting activity in which
476 men and women work together—are organised. Most other communal enterprises, except those of a ceremonial nature, are carried out by groups of men or of women working
[687] independently. In most cases the actual procedure follows
[554] so closely a traditional pattern that little actual leadership
[602] is required and this is generally accepted as the responsibility of the most senior and experienced of the older men who stand in the correct kinship status to the group in whose territory the hunting "drive" is carried out. Because these methods are traditional and are therefore regarded as a recapitulation of a pattern laid down by the ancestral culture heroes, the leadership is nominal and generally unobtrusive.

592 Each family—the group consisting of a man and his wife or wives and their young children—lives as a separate unit within the camp. It generally makes its own hut, shelter or breakwind according to the season, but the essential thing is that its life is centred around its own fireside, and that each family group cooks its own food, and lives as an independent and self-contained group within the horde. As a rule only one regular meal is eaten in camp. This is at night after the people have returned from the day's hunting.

591 There is no single women's camp, and up to the time of
● 593 marriage a girl remains with her parents and shares with
883 her mother the work of gathering vegetable food, and of food preparation, the making of bark houses and the getting of wood and water. But in the case of a boy, after commencement of his first initiation rites, at about the age of puberty, he leaves the fireside of his parents and goes to live in the single men's camp.

live in the single men's camp. The brother-sister tabu, which is very strict, now comes into operation, and his sisters as well as his mother are prohibited from eating any of the game that he kills and which is now known by a special term, *kälŋboi*. But he still receives vegetable food from his mother and from certain other female relatives which he reciprocates with gifts of fish, honey or "sugar bag" and any other food the eating of which is not restricted by *kälŋboi* tabus. Later as he acquires status and the tabus upon the game he kills are removed or relaxed, he will make regular reciprocal gifts of animal food to his *ŋandi* and to the other female relatives upon whom, prior to his marriage, he was dependent for vegetable food. 262 431 593 602 883

The division of labour is well-marked. The chief task of the woman, besides the bearing of children, is the collection and preparation of vegetable food and of shellfish, as well as such small game as rats, bandicoots, opossums and *kuku*, "sugar bag", the honey of the small black native bee (*Trigona* spp.), as she may glean by the way. Each woman works for her own family group—her husband and children—but some of the food that she obtains may also be sent to relatives to whom she has obligations defined by kinship. Others again may be prohibited from partaking of this food because of their kinship or other status at certain stages of their own or the woman's relationship to the society. Most of the food obtained by a woman during menstruation is tabu to certain relatives—particularly to her brothers. Contrary to the general idea the main food supply among aborigines, except at certain restricted seasons of the year, is not animal, but vegetable, and in Arnhem Land upwards of sixty food plants are known. Some of these are local and are obtained more or less casually and in small quantity. But a comparatively small number, which 222 462 [594 602] 222 262 [602] [841]

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

which goes on. But while these obligations impose a heavy burden, especially upon a young man who must attend a long series of ceremonies with a vista of payments to be met, the ceremonies in turn confer some benefit upon him, although this may be indirect. They carry increased social status and prestige which in turn bring gradual liberation from some of the irksome tabus which influence almost every act of a young man.

Although on these occasions the immediate burden of gathering vegetable food falls on his female relatives, especially upon his mother and sisters, this does not relieve the initiate of his own personal obligations, but rather intensifies them. He must now redouble his efforts in hunting to enable him in turn to supply his women relations with fish, kangaroo, "sugar bag" or wild honey, in order to retain their goodwill. A man's success as a hunter depends not only on his ability to stalk and his skill with the spear but also on his capacity to make, and to maintain in serviceable condition, his hunting weapons, his fishing lines and nets and sometimes also a canoe. So initiation, especially initiation into the jealously-guarded clan totems (*mărdai'in*) of the small groups which characterise the social organisation of North-eastern Arnhem Land, with their intense solidarity and quick resentment,[10] sets up a long train of social obligations—each with a definite economic import—each requiring gift and counter gift, and furnishing the motive for work, the urge for production both of food and *gerri*.

[10] Just as generous presentations of *gerri* (material wealth) and *yăta* (food) promote goodwill, so tardiness in the discharge of these obligations may lead to avenging expeditions and interclan feuds. A man who is unpopular, or who is notorious for his carelessness in these matters is more likely to be named as the victim when a scapegoat is sought to avenge a death or wrong.

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 584 to feed her [give her to him]"; but if he is a greedy fellow he says, "No, I want to keep her myself."

159 [582] 593 The black man's custom is different from the way white men are. A black man takes a wife when she is very young, sometimes before her breasts have come. He sleeps with her, loves her, and does everything but [826] have intercourse with her. This makes his girl want him and makes her breasts come large and start sticking out. That is before her blood comes. [841] When blood first comes to a woman it is after she has copulated with a man for the first time. That is what causes it. She has blood a few more times, and then she has a baby, and then the blood stops.

159 587 595 If my wife gave me no children, I would go to my gawel and tell him. He would say, "Wait a little while and I will give you another daughter of mine so that you can have children." If my wife died, my father-in-law would give me another one right away. If he hasn't a grown daughter, he would wait until his little one got larger and then he would give that girl to me.

159 595 When my second wife got large enough her father and mother brought her to me and said for her to stay with me and that I was her husband (pages 95-96). My first wife [the new wife's older sister] did not growl at me but kept very quiet when I was around. When I was away she growled at her little sister and told her to go on away. "Mahkarolla belongs to me and not to you." By and by my new wife told me about this. She also told her mother and father.

[626] They said to my first wife, "You must stop this quarreling with your sister. She is just the same as you. You are our daughter and she is our daughter. You have Mahkarolla for a husband, and we have given her to him and she has him for a husband. She is your young sister. You will now have someone to look out for the wood for you, and she can help you get food for your husband."

My wife kept quiet then. Those two sisters live together just like good friends. They never fight like the wives of some husbands do. They look out for each other's children.

159 584 When another gawel liked me he went to my proper father-in-law and said, "I like that son-in-law that belongs to you. I would like to give him my daughter. He can be a son-in-law of mine, too." My gawel, because he is a good man, said, "You haven't promised that girl of yours to somebody else, have you?" If that man had said, "Yes," mine would have said, "No, you can't because that will make trouble for my son-in-law." That man said, "No," so my father-in-law said, "Yes."

159 606 My mother-in-law—I don't talk to her. I can't go close to her camp, can't go pick up something close to her camp, can't take food from her. I can't give food to her straight; I must give it through my wife. When I am

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

around her I can't talk high; I must talk low. It is just the same for her. I can't look at her when we are close. If I go along a path and meet my mokul I must leave that path. I must leave that path and go another way. If I walked along a path and did not see her and accidentally touched her, her sweat would make me swell up in the groin. My sweat would do the same thing for her.

My mother-in-law is a very good woman. I like her very much. She is very good to me. She always saves all the tobacco she gets and keeps it for me when I have no more. I always send her the best of the kangaroos I kill and the turtles I spear. She always says nice things about me to other people. I hear them and it makes me feel good. When my mokul gets a little bit old and she can't have any more children and she looks a little like a man and has hair on her face, then I can talk to her and she can talk to me. We must be very serious when we do this (pages 101-103).

I like my mother's mother [mari] very much. I like her best of all. She is more my mother than my own mother. When I was little, she looked out for me more than my own mother. She gave me plenty of food. She carried me when I was a baby. I like my mother's sister next best, then my mother. My mother's sister was very good to me, too (pages 96-98).

My true father died when I was small. My mother and we children went to my father's yukiyuko [younger brother], as is the law of our people.

Having an old woman for a wife is no good. She can't have a baby. She is too old. If a man doesn't have children he won't have any sons and daughters-in-law, and he, when he is old, won't have any food and plenty of spears and plenty of tobacco. It is no good having an old woman. She is all the same as rubbish.

My wife is not like that—she is young. She is a very good woman. She always looks straight ahead and keeps her mouth very still when she is around other men. She never talks loud. Sometimes, when I am away too long, she won't give me food when I come back. She thinks I have been away too long. When she does this I sit down and wait a while and say nothing. It is better to keep quiet. Then I say, "Well, what are you mad about?" She says nothing, and her face looks different. I can see by how her heart is beating that she is wild inside. I keep asking and asking. Then she tells me she thinks maybe I have stayed away a long time and have been with some other woman. She thinks maybe I haven't been hunting and I have been fooling her. Clear inside she knows this is not true, and by and by she gets quiet and gives me something to eat. Sometimes she thinks when I have been away that I have an old sweetheart and that I go out all the time to see her. After she has growled for a long time I say nothing and then I say, "No, I have no sweetheart. If I did have I would come and tell

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 you. You're not a man." This makes her quiet. I think sometimes if I did
593 have a sweetheart I wouldn't tell her, because none of the other men do
[837] when they have them.

159 When I was a young man, women were more careful and better than
837 they are now. My brother, Badunga, is just starting to grow a mustache. This no-good woman we call the Mokoi [evil ghost] has already tried to seduce him. My brother was out hunting the other day with some other boys, and when he was a little bit away from them that Mokoi woman saw him. She was getting shells, away from the rest of the women. She is no longer a young woman. She has no children because she has copulated with too many men who were not her husbands. She sneaked up on him and talked very nice to him, but my brother Badunga did nothing and came away. He was afraid, and besides he did not like the woman.

159 Badunga told me. I went down to her husband's camp and told him.
684 I called that Mokoi out and gave her a very hard beating. Her husband, who is my "half-father," did nothing. When I had finished he took a spear-thrower and started beating her too. All the people in the camp said that was very good and was what she needed.

159 Women before were different. They sat down more quiet than they do
837 now. This one, who is now Dimala's wife, who used to be my sweetheart when I was a young boy, seduced one of the Ritarngo boys. He is too young. I said, "I don't know what is the matter with you women now. You are going after younger and younger boys all the time for sweethearts. I shall have to watch Marl-ma-leen and Pulli [his 18-months-old son and three-year-old boy], or you will have them out too. You are ruining our young men because you are teaching them to have too many women who don't belong to them. They won't sit quiet with their own wives when they have them because you women teach them another way. When we old men
[836] were young, a man had one sweetheart and no more until he was married and had proper wives of his own."

159 If the sweetheart I had a long time ago would come to me now and
572 ask for food I must give it to her. I would not have sexual relations with
837 her now, because I am a married man and that would be wrong. When I go to her camp she gives me food. Her husband is a good man; he says to that woman, "Give Mahkarolla some food. He used to be your sweetheart." If he were no good and jealous, he would growl at the woman and tell her not to give me anything to eat. I haven't any sweethearts now. Dimala's wife used to be my sweetheart a long time ago. She likes me very much now. Sometimes she comes around and wants me to go out to the bush with her but I say, "No, I've got a wife. I have children." I will not "play" with another woman. I would get a baby (pages 74-92).

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 I said, "Your mother is here alongside of me." Her mother had not had
787 children yet. We had no family. She was only a young girl. I awakened my
842 wife and told her my dream, for I thought straightaway, "I am going to have a daughter." I said to her, "I dreamed a girl for you." My wife knew then she was going to have a daughter.

After my daughter was born we knew we were going to have a son because I dreamed a son. One moon went by. My wife felt a little bit heavy. She told me. I said, "Yes, that is what I told you before in the dream." A few months later a son was born.

159 I like my children. If a father and mother do not take care of their sons
593 and daughters all the women everywhere start gossiping about them. They
626 say that they are crazy, that maybe they have an evil spirit in their heads,
855 and they say they are no good. We men talk the same way, too. We do not like to see little children mistreated. My little son is just the same as my spear-thrower. He is just the same as my right arm (page 71). I think
159 it is a good thing for a man to have a lot of children. It makes a lot of
842 people in his tribe. It always gives him, when he gets old, all the things he
593 wants to eat and use for himself. If he has trouble, and all men have trouble, he does not have to go to his mother's people or his wife's people for help. He has it himself. He can take his own sons and fight any people because he is strong. When a man has no sons and no daughters, then when he gets old he can do nothing. We black men like daughters too because when they marry that gives us many wakus and makes us very strong. Good sons-in-law always make many gifts. Good wakus make men proud. We like sons too because nobody can hurt us.

159 Sometimes people talk out loud in the camp at night, and they say,
582 "Which one did you promise this daughter of yours to?"

I say, "I don't know." I say, "No one." I say, "If I have a sister and she has a son I can't wait any longer then. I must point at that waku [sister's son and son-in-law]. He must get her. But now I must keep quiet. I can't say anything. My sister has no son and I must wait. My little boy's mother has a brother; by and by when he has a daughter, I must go to him and get that girl for my son. That will make everything right and keep our family straight" (pages 65-67).

Maikarolla as a Friend and a Murngin

000 Those who believe that the savage has a prerational mentality have not known natives intimately, either because of not being in contact with them or because of the mental barrier of scientific or religious dogma. The larger ideas and more general concepts of primitive people are much the same as our own. They have their philosophers and thinkers, their fools and their

753
776 originally by the Djangauwo sisters—women culture
[773] heroes, who, in their progress across east Arnhem Land, thrust their yam sticks into the ground as they walked. From each of the holes caused in this way there gushed a spring of water of a special kind called *milmindjarrk*. Certain tabus restrict the drinking of *milmindjarrk* water and my informant Nyarrang declared that the swelling on his neck was due to ritual punishment in the form of a blow from the *malli* of the heavy *birlma*, used by the Djangauwo sisters whose spirits still preside over *milmindjarrk* waters. Some time later, the effect of the blow from the *malli birlma* had become manifest in the form of a swelling. It is characteristic of these people that when 'something is wrong,' when they receive a warning in the
[787] form of an omen or portent, or when 'bad luck' attends their hunting or fishing expeditions, they look back over their lives for some incident which has caused them
[152] uneasiness or concern and which they feel may have incurred the displeasure of the *malli wangarr*, the spirits of the ancestral culture heroes.

756 The role of the *marrngitmirri* is twofold: first, to diagnose sickness or to determine the cause of death, and secondly
[776] to find a scapegoat by the aid of his *marrngit*—who, being
[787] spirits or ghosts, possess occult powers, powers to see things not visible to mortals, which they communicate to the *marrngitmirri*, who in turn passes the information to the kin of the victim. As a rule the verdict of the *marrngitmirri*
[682 is accepted without question and the people proceed to
● 593] select an avenger. This will be a person within the kinship horizon of the deceased—sometimes a younger brother but often a more distant relation from a clan to which, under an extension of the kinship structure, he has special obligations, which may be reciprocal.

In the marginal area adjacent to the Burara, *i.e.* close to
[754] the territorial stronghold of the *ragalk*—the *marrngitmirri* looks at once for signs of the tell-tale magic of the dreaded *kalka*, just as a man does when seeking the reason for what he accepts as ritual punishment.

754 Even in the culturally homogeneous area of north-east
756 Arnhem Land, the beliefs and ideas about the *marrngit* and
114 *marrngitmirri*, as well as about *ragalk*, vary considerably—necessarily so, in a matter which is strongly subjective. The foregoing reference to the role of the *marrngitmirri* discounts Webb's statement (*loc. cit.*) that this man 'possesses no special influence in the life of his horde or tribe.' It must be apparent that at critical times, when the sentiments of the
[753 kin of a sick or newly deceased man are aroused as they
761] are by the pronouncements of the *marrngitmirri* (which, backed by belief in his *marrngit*, are accepted without question), his influence on the horde in which he lives is one of life and death.

The Kalka *at Work*

754 The *kalka* or sorcerer is believed to be responsible for
753 bringing about the sickness and ultimate death of his
761 victim but he does not profess to diagnose sickness or injury due to magic, which is the role only of the *marrngit*. In practice, *kalka* may operate singly but more generally they work in groups of two or three. A sorcerer is likely

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

conclusion that in north-east Arnhem Land, the natives really did know the physiological facts, but were not interested in them; they were only interested in 'spiritual conception', which established a person's place in the social and religious structure of the tribe. But whatever be the degree of knowledge or ignorance regarding the physiological facts, there is no doubt that the accepted spiritual doctrine is one of pre-existence. The unborn spirits sojourn at the totemic well waiting to be incarnated, or reincarnated; to that centre they will return after death; and without the entry of the pre-existent spirit child into the womb, there could be no conception.

Everyday Matters

Mr Chaseling is not concerned with discussing complex social and religious problems. His aim is to help us know the Aboriginal as he is. To this end he provides much information regarding interesting everyday affairs. There is no smoke-signal code in this region, and message sticks are simply aids to memory. The Aborigines like having visitors and are anxious to keep them. Like the rest of us, they are subject to flattery, and they use a highly developed form of praise in asking for favours. The status of the women is low, but some affection is shown between spouses; moreover, women do exercise an important influence on affairs; for they live longer on the average than the man (they are not killed in 'wars'), and as a result accumulate a greater knowledge of the everyday myths and legends and of the clan's enemies and friends. There are about three females to each male, another consequence of 'warfare', and connected with this is the fact that usually a man has three wives; but there are a few cases of men with up to twelve wives.

These and many like facts are recorded in the pages which follow, pages which will do much to help readers appreciate the Aborigines of north-east Arnhem Land as human beings,

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

touch it, or for his brothers to do so either. The night was hideous with their quarrelling, and though the brothers attacked the old man with their spear-throwers, he loudly proclaimed the tabu and the youths dared not eat the meat.

Sexual intercourse is accepted as a natural function, not to be affected by proximity to the family circle or to other families camped a few feet away, nor yet by occasional unseemly interest from the young men's camp. Even in east Arnhem Land, where a strict morality is outwardly enforced, intercourse is little less than promiscuous, and it is not to be wondered at that most youths laughingly admit their *affairs d'amours*, and that women frequently make the initial advance—though secretly for fear of their husbands.

To prevent irregularities, married men enforce a number of prohibitions, and unmarried and unattached men are segregated in a camp by themselves at a reasonable distance from any family. A woman is not allowed to eat food presented to her husband by a youth, in case he should consider her to be under an obligation to him, and if a youth wishes to share his food with a married brother, he must not go to his camp but must call him over and give it to him.

In many relationships it is unlawful for a man and woman to greet each other, and when I have asked for a name, I have often been greeted by evasion or silence, simply because no one present was allowed to utter the name. Brothers and sisters may not look at each other when speaking, but talk with averted faces. A man converses freely with his wife, mother, daughter, granddaughter, and niece; but when speaking to other relatives he averts his face, and not being able to call them by name he draws their attention by an ejaculation or by saying: 'I wish to

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

wives are often sisters—a relationship which is likely to be favourable to very young wives, who often are no more than ten or twelve years of age when married and go to live with their older sisters. More than likely, the mother will later follow them to the outskirts of the new family circle; there to sit by her own small fire and to be suffered in silence by her son-in-law. Young wives are married as children and are regarded by the husband almost as nieces. Older wives, according to their disposition, may treat these children kindly or force them to hew and carry and attend their whims. Older women give the younger ones rigid training in wifely duties, and the arrangement often works out happily. I have seen young wives, and old ones too, cry without restraint when they have been unable to accompany the husband on a hunting trip.

It has been said that aboriginal women are treated with constant brutality and that they play an unimportant role in the decisions of the horde. This is not so, although a wife is at the disposal of her husband and the tone of her existence depends upon his character. Stone Age woman's life is hard, like that of all Stone Age nomads, but her influence is much more important than is popularly imagined. Women join in all camp disputes—indeed, with their gossip they often cause them—and their voices can be heard above the din of shouting men and howling dogs. In peace-making ceremonies they taunt the offenders, abusing them and brandishing digging-sticks in their faces, and they urge their sons either to make peace or destroy the offender. I have seen several peace-making ceremonies collapse because women urged their men to attack the offenders who were suing for peace.

In rare instances termagants control their families and sons' families by criticizing, nagging, and threatening. Late one day I came out of the bush to a camp where Yakangaiya and his married sons were sitting quietly in

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

YULENGOR

828 827 Stone Age man believes that his emotions are seated in his stomach, and his names for anger, fear, jealousy, and the rest, are descriptive of the changes that take place in the stomach in generating emotion. They make no distinction between anger, indignation, and jealousy; they are known as 'ngoi-mari-buna' ('ngoi' referring to underneath or the foundation), meaning the stomach boils.

[578] A man who refuses to support his relative in a quarrel is called 'ngoi kapumiri'; that is, he has a watery stomach (or as we should say in English 'no guts').

Pleasure, joy, and happiness are dependent on the stomach, which subsides into a peaceful calm on hearing welcome news. It was explained that when a man sees an enemy approaching, his stomach boils and his anger rises, but if the enemy says he has come to make peace, the man's anger disappears and his stomach subsides into a flat calm 'like the sea after a storm'; he has 'the wind taken out of his sails'.

Sorrow and regret also rise from the stomach. Fear comes from the same source, and rises and swells in the throat; Stone Age man also knows something about his 'heart in his mouth'.

[593] Love is dependent on the stomach, and the affection of a father for his son, or the devotion of mothers for their children, boils from the depths. I was reminded of the ageless biblical story of Joseph's meeting his treacherous half-brothers after many years; he was speechless, 'for his bowels did yearn for his (youngest) brother'.

152 It has often been suggested that aborigines have not the same highly developed affection for each other as white people, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Devotion is genuine, and intimate, and is openly expressed on scores of occasions which in a white community would call for little more than passing sympathy. The first initiation in a boy's life reaches its climax in circumcision, when wide-spread emotion is expressed. Women, girls, and children

304 881 [302]